



Celebrating Differences, Sharing Similarities

BIG IDEA(S):

- What is a scholarship?
- How can I find scholarships that are a good fit for me?

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- All About Scholarships handout (4 pages)
- Scrap paper
- Devices with Internet access, one per participant or as many as possible

OVERVIEW

In this seventh session, young people will learn all about scholarships. They will then consider the qualities that make them unique before they use scholarship search engines to find scholarships they are eligible to apply for!

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Print and copy the handout listed in the *What You Will Need* section, so there are enough for all participants.
- Gather the devices listed in the *What You Will Need* section, so there are enough for all participants. If one device per participant is not possible, gather as many as possible.
- Read through the activity to make sure you understand the directions before the session begins.

ENGAGE

- Begin by encouraging the young people to think about a quality that makes them unique. It could be a characteristic, an ability, an experience, a physical trait, an achievement, etc. The goal is for them to think of something that no one else in the room is likely to share.
- Then explain the following:
 - Each young person will take turns standing up and sharing their unique quality.
 - Once one person has shared, they should say: "How about you?"
 - If another young person shares the exact same characteristic, ability, experience, trait, achievement, etc., they should stand up to indicate their similarity.
 - Everyone will then reset and take a seat.
 - This should continue until every young person in the group has shared.

EXPLORE

1. Explain that one reason thinking about our unique qualities is important is because it can help guide us as we consider which scholarships we can apply for—and which skills and qualities we can highlight to help us stand out from the other applicants.
2. Go on and explain that scholarships are a form of financial aid that can help you pay for college. Unlike some other forms of financial aid, scholarships do *not* have to be repaid!
3. Pass out one **All About Scholarships handout** to each young person. Either encourage everyone to read the handout's *Learn* section to themselves or ask a volunteer to read it aloud. As this section is being read, encourage each young person to underline for information that they find interesting and/or surprising.
4. Once the reading is complete, ask several young people to share what they underlined and why they found it interesting or surprising.
5. Then guide the young people in moving on to the *Reflect* portion of the handout. To prepare them for their own scholarship applications, encourage young people to work independently or in pairs to brainstorm their strengths and/or the ways they are unique.

Tip: Reassure everyone that these qualities don't necessarily have to be something that makes them completely unlike their peers. The goal instead is to brainstorm qualities that make them special. There are different scholarships available for many different qualities and skills! Young people with a common skill or quality are eligible to apply for the same scholarship. The completed application will help the judges better understand how all of their qualities and experiences work together to create the unique person that is *you!*

6. Last but not least, bring everyone's attention to the *Checklist* section. Explain that this list will help guide young people through how to search for scholarships. Give everyone a few minutes to read through the list.
7. Then direct the young people's attention to the final *Search Notes* page and tell them that they will now use this page as they begin their scholarship search! Every young person should:
 - Select a scholarship search engine from the *Search Notes* page with which to begin their search.
 - Access the website and filter the search's criteria accordingly, using their *Reflection* section to help as needed.
 - Carefully review the results and try to select at least one scholarship for which they could be a competitive applicant.
 - Use the *Search Notes* page to take notes on the promising scholarship(s) that they find. If they find more than one scholarship using a particular search engine, they may use additional paper for notes.
8. Once everyone has a device (they may work in pairs or small groups if needed), give young people the majority of the remaining time to perform their search.
9. When there are just a few moments left in the session, bring everyone back together to reflect on their experience. Ask:
 - Through a show of hands, who was able to find a scholarship that they believe they may be qualified for?
 - What skills, experiences, abilities, or talents make you a good fit for this scholarship?
 - What unique skills, experiences, abilities, or talents can help you stand out from the other applicants when you apply for this scholarship?

MAKE THE CONNECTION

Scholarships come in all kinds of amounts—from \$500 or less to much more. While the scholarship process may seem intimidating, about three-quarters of all full-time undergraduates do receive at least one grant or scholarship to help pay for their education.¹ And, if you're looking to pursue a STEM career, there are many STEM-focused scholarships focused solely on helping high school grads work toward a STEM-related career goal!

EXTEND AND EVALUATE

Do you meet more than once a month? In an upcoming session, you could:

- Continue to set aside time for not only scholarship searching, but scholarship applications. Applying for scholarships can be almost as time consuming as applying for college... and having several sessions dedicated to this process could make all the difference! If you have time, you could dedicate:
 - Two additional sessions to scholarship applications, including time for peers and adults to critique and edit each other's applications.
 - One additional session to developing a scholarship-application timeline and plan for the months to come!

¹ <https://educationdata.org/>

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All scholarships are unique and are awarded based on different criteria. However, most require a completed application form, an official high school transcript, and your responses to short-answer questions. Generally speaking, there are two broad scholarship categories (and some scholarships are a combination of the two):

- **Financial Need Scholarships** take your finances (and your family’s finances) into account. This information is usually gained from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)—which is one reason why it’s so important to complete this on time!
- **Merit Scholarships** are awarded based on your individual accomplishments. Most colleges, and many organizations, offer merit-based scholarships for students with strong academic records, leadership qualities, and/or community involvement, among other things.

Within these two categories, there are many types of scholarships given by various organizations and for different reasons. Here are just a few examples:

- Academic (grades and academic achievement)
- Athletic (sports)
- Career (professional organizations and unions)
- Corporate (offered by companies to their employees and sometimes to anyone)
- College (specific to college student wishes to attend)
- Community (local organizations and groups and/or community involvement/activism)
- Skill/Talent (arts-based and/or creative organizations and groups)
- Background-specific (e.g., for special needs, medical issues, family life, or students’ race, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, LGBTQI, etc.)
- Combination (e.g., academic and community service or athletic and need-based)

Reflect

Take time to fill out the squares below with attributes that make you unique. Thinking about your special characteristics can guide you as you consider which scholarships to apply for as well as which skills and qualities you should highlight to help you stand out from the other applicants.

<p>Skills & Talents</p>	<p>Extra-Curricular Activities</p>
<p>Unique Personal Traits</p>	<p>Unique or Defining Background Information</p>

Begin

Now that you have a better idea of the qualities that make you stand out from the rest, you're ready to start looking for scholarships! Use the resources and tips compiled below to help you kick off your search.

Personal Checklist:

- Start your scholarship search early and block off time each week to pursue it.
- Think outside the box! Look for a variety of scholarships.
- Check out scholarship search sites, such as the following:
 - [Fastweb](#)
 - [Cappex](#)
 - [Chegg Scholarships](#)
 - [Scholarships.com](#)
 - [CollegeBoard](#)
 - [RaiseMe](#)
 - [Scholar Snapp](#)
 - [CHCI NextOpp](#)
 - [Niche](#)
 - [Unigo](#)
 - [Bold.org](#)
 - [CollegeScholarships.org](#)
- Fill out and submit a [FAFSA](#) by the deadline.
- Consider taking the [PSAT/NMSQT](#) exam. If you take this test during your 11th grade year, the results may help qualify you for some merit-based scholarships.

For general advice, questions, and/or information, turn to:

- The counseling office at your school
- The financial aid office at a college or university
- Your library's reference section
- Clubs and organizations

Branch out into your community and find out if any of these offer scholarships:

- Your employer or your parents' (or other relatives') employers
- Ethnicity-based organizations such as the United Negro College Fund
- Community groups such as Toastmasters, Chamber of Commerce, or Kiwanis
- Foundations, religious or community organizations, local businesses, or civic groups
- Organizations (including professional associations) related to your area of study

Check local, state, and national government resources:

- [Your state grant agency](#)
- [Federal agencies](#)
- The U.S. Department of Labor's [free scholarship search tool](#)

Research national corporate scholarships, such as the following:

- Doodle 4 Google
- The Gates Scholarship (@TheGatesScholar)
- Regeneron Science Talent Search
- Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation (@cokescholars)

For more information about the financial aid process, check out [Financial Pur\\$uit](#), a free self-paced module on [TGR EDU: Explore!](#)

Fastweb (fastweb.com)	Scholar Snapp (scholarsnapp.org)
Scholarship Name: Deadline: Brief Notes:	Scholarship Name: Deadline: Brief Notes:
Cappex (new.cappex.com)	CHCI NextOpp (chcinextopp.net/)
Scholarship Name: Deadline: Brief Notes:	Scholarship Name: Deadline: Brief Notes:
Chegg Scholarships (chegg.com/scholarships)	Niche (niche.com/colleges/scholarships/)
Scholarship Name: Deadline: Brief Notes:	Scholarship Name: Deadline: Brief Notes:
Scholarships.com	Unigo (unigo.com)
Scholarship Name: Deadline: Brief Notes:	Scholarship Name: Deadline: Brief Notes:
CollegeBoard (bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search)	Bold.org
Scholarship Name: Deadline: Brief Notes:	Scholarship Name: Deadline: Brief Notes:
RaiseMe (raise.me)	CollegeScholarships.org
Scholarship Name: Deadline: Brief Notes:	Scholarship Name: Deadline: Brief Notes: